

Advancing Awareness: A Grant Proposal to Address AAPI Youth Suicidal Behavior

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Abstract:

The purpose of this grant proposal is to obtain funding to develop a training program for mental health professionals in Orange County, California to advance their awareness of factors impacting Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth suicidal behavior, highlight the importance of culturally competent care, and enhance the confidence of mental health professionals when working with AAPI youth aged 15 to 24 to drive empowerment through effective service provision.

The Advancing Awareness program strives to provide a holistic approach to a systemic concern: suicidal behavior among AAPI youth. Through providing insight into various contexts in the literature review: historical, cultural, environmental, the impact of discrimination and prejudice on AAPI youth mental health, protective factors, and current interventions targeting this social problem, the Advancing Awareness program highlights the importance of context, culturally competent care, and intersectionality when working with AAPI youth to address systemic disparities.

Introduction:

The **Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI)** population faces disparities when it comes to mental health care.

- **SAMHSA's 2019 National Survey:** AAPI individuals are the least likely compared to all racial and ethnic groups to use mental health services.
- According to recent data, **7%** of AAPI adults compared to **19.8%** of non-Hispanic White adults received mental health services (McGarity-Palmer et al., 2023).
- If AAPI individuals do seek mental health services, they face microaggressions within the therapeutic space (Kim & Gonzales, 2024).

Between 1999 and 2021, suicide rates have **doubled** among the AAPI youth population, increasing from **3.6%** to **7.1%** per **100,000** youth (Reyes et al., 2024). However, suicide prevention literature for the AAPI youth population is scant.

Purpose of Thesis/Project:

- Raise awareness among mental health professionals about the connection between AAPI youth intersectional identities and expression of suicidal behavior.
- Foster cultural humility among mental health providers.
- Expand the knowledge of mental health professionals to support and empower AAPI youth.

Target Population:

This grant aims to facilitate awareness and prevention of suicidal behavior of AAPI youth among mental health professionals in Orange County, California.

Potential Funder and Host Agency:



The Anneberg Foundation is the potential funder.

- The foundation provides grants to nonprofits domestically and internationally to promote equity and innovation and address systemic challenges and disparities.

OCAPICA is an agency that strives to improve the overall health of AAPI individuals residing in Orange County.

- Provides culturally sensitive behavioral health care (free mental health screenings and therapy).
- **Project Hope:** Provides short-term individual counseling to individuals from 0 to 25 years old and provides educational workshops to mental health professionals.
- Promotes empowerment and advocacy through culturally-informed care.

Description of Proposed Project:

The proposed Advancing Awareness training program strives to supplement the existing OCAPICA programs that focus on addressing mental health among the AAPI youth population and culturally-informed training for mental health professionals.

The program strives to provide information on historical, environmental, social, and cultural contexts that play a role in AAPI youth suicidality to enhance the knowledge of mental health professionals about this population in hopes of strengthening service provision through considering intersectional elements.

Moreover, the program strives to encourage mental health professionals to incorporate culture into their practice to empower AAPI youth clients.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: Raise awareness among mental health professionals about the connection between AAPI youth intersectional identities and expression of suicidal behavior.

Objective 1: Provide information on how intersectional identities affect help-seeking and mental health expression among the AAPI youth community.

Objective 2: Utilize interactive elements to assist in developing potential application of learning in the practice setting.

Goal 2: Foster cultural humility among mental health providers.

Objective 1: Provide an overview of the impact of microaggressions and the implications of a lack of culturally informed care.

Goal 3: Expand the knowledge of mental health professionals to support and empower AAPI youth.

Objective 1: Provide training on culturally- and trauma-informed intervention and therapeutic skills to incorporate into the therapeutic process when working with AAPI youth.

Description of Analysis:

Context. Considering the historical context of how AAPI individuals are viewed in the United States is essential to gaining insight into the root of the disparities facing the AAPI community and AAPI youth (Au, 2022). Furthermore, knowledge of cultural factors allows for a better understanding of how intersectional elements affect mental health outcomes of AAPI youth (Kim & Gonzales, 2024).

Risks. The COVID-19 pandemic and Anti-Asian hate and the model minority myth fuel the mental health concerns and barriers to access among AAPI youth (Adnan et al., 2023; Au et al., 2022).

Protective factors. Youth resiliency and life satisfaction are protective factors (Huang et al., 2015; Iyer et al., 2023).

Outcomes:

Cultural considerations are essential when working with AAPI youth as it influences mental health expression and help-seeking behavior (Au, 2022).

The knowledge of culture and its impacts on mental health outcomes and help-seeking behavior is essential to further encourage help-seeking and cultural inclusion within the therapeutic space (Kim & Gonzales, 2024). The overall expected outcome is to instill confidence among mental health professionals when working with AAPI youth and better service provision.

Summary of Budget:

The proposed budget for the one-year duration of the program is \$81,833.20.

- This proposed budget includes staffing and direct expenses.
 - Staffing (1 Executive Director, 1 Research and Evaluation Manager, 1 Clinical Program Manager, 1 Facilitator, 1 Master of Social Work Intern, 1 Freelance Instructional Designer) = \$80,940.
 - Direct Expenses (electronic supplies and recruitment materials): \$943.20.

Potential Impact of Proposed Project:

On a micro scale, providing a training program regarding AAPI youth suicidal behavior provides an opportunity for improved service provision. In terms of mezzo social work, working with an organization like OCAPICA provides an avenue for community support. Lastly, on a macro scale, given the gap in research literature about AAPI youth suicidal behavior, this grant proposal highlights the need for further research.

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